

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of making a bio-degradable foamed body, in which a polymer mixture comprising a biodegradable polymer and water is introduced into a mould, the mould being defined between moulding surfaces of two opposed parts that mate together, wherein the polymer mixture contains no foaming agents apart from water, each mould part is of electrically conducting material and each of the moulding surfaces is coated with a layer of an electrically insulating material, and wherein radio-frequency signals at a frequency between 1 MHZ and 200 MHZ are applied between the mould parts so that the polymer mixture is heated by dielectric heating, such that the water turns to steam, causing so the polymer mixture to form forms a foam, fill fills the mould and set sets in no more than 15 s, the mould restricting the flow of steam such that the pressure in the mould rises to above 10 atmospheres during the foaming process.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the radio-frequency signals are applied such that the polymer mixture forms a foam, fills the mould and sets in less than 10 s.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ wherein the radio-frequency signals are applied at a frequency between 20 MHZ and 50 MHZ.

4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the polymer mixture is at least in part starch-based.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for making a foamed body from a polymer mixture that contains no foaming agents apart from water, the apparatus including a mould defined between moulding surfaces of two opposed parts that mate together, wherein each mould part is of electrically conducting material and is coated with a layer of an electrically insulating material, and means to apply radio-frequency signals between the mould parts so that polymer mixture between the mould parts is heated by dielectric heating, the mould being such as to restrict the flow of steam such that the pressure in the mould rises to above 10 atmospheres during the foaming process.

7. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 6 wherein the electrically insulating material used to coat the moulding surfaces is one that is not dielectrically heated.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 6 ~~or claim 7~~ wherein, when the mould parts are together, they are held apart by an electrical insulator that is thicker than the gap defining the mould.